Fire control strategy

891. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Forest Survey of India (FSI) has undertaken any study so far, to know the reasons behind loss of timber worth Rs.35 crore in fires in 63 million hectares of the country's forests everyday, apart from unaccounted damage to bio-diversity; and

(b) if not, how much time FSI is likely to take to develop mechanism to analyze its effectiveness in saving wild life and bio-diversity, as well as to identify fire sensitive zones which may help in formulating the fire control strategy in India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Forest Survey of India has not done any study to assess damage in monetary terms to the forests due to fire or to analyze reasons for forest fires.

(b) There is no proposal with Forest Survey of India at present to develop mechanism to analyze its effectiveness in saving wild life and bio-diversity, as well as to identify fire sensitive zones.

Yamuna action plan

892. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Yamuna Action Plan I and II were complete failures, as far as cleaning up the polluted river Yamuna was concerned when Rs. 2,800 crore had reportedly been spent on the cleaning of river;

(b) if so, whether Government has been able so far to find out whether it would practically be possible to clean up the river before the Commonwealth Games, 2010; and

(c) if not, who is responsible for inordinate delay of this project and how much time is likely to be taken for cleaning up of the river?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (c) The water quality of Yamuna has not shown the desired improvement owing to large gap between the demand and availability of sewage treatment capacity and lack of fresh water in the river. Implementation of the river pollution abatement works is an ongoing and collective effort of Central and State Governments.

Yamuna Action Plan (YAP) was launched by the Central Government in 1993 to supplement the efforts of State Governments in addressing the problem of pollution of river Yamuna. The works taken up under YAP include interception and diversion of raw sewage, setting up of Sewage Treatment Plants, creation of low cost sanitation facilities, setting up of electric/improved wood crematoria and river front development. The Plan covers 21 towns of three States of Delhi, Uttar

Pradesh and Haryana. Under the Plan so far an expenditure of Rs. 872.15 crore has been incurred and sewage treatment capacity of 753.25 million litres per day has been created.

Besides the YAP, the Government of NCT of Delhi has also taken up sewerage and sewage treatment works on Yamuna under other schemes. To ensure that only treated effluent is discharged to the river Yamuna, Delhi Jal Board (DJB) has prepared schemes for laying of interceptor sewers along three major drains namely Najafgarh, Shahdara and Supplementary, augmentation of sewage treatment capacity, interception of drains, rehabilitation of trunk sewers, laying of sewerage system in unsewered colonies and rural areas and desilting of peripheral/internal sewers. As per information provided by DJB, these schemes are likely to be completed in a period of 4 years.

Changes in environmental clearance process

893. SHRI SUBHASH PRASAD YADAV: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has proposed any amendments in respect of environmental clearance process;

(b) if so, the details thereof including the Finance Ministry report that recommended severe dilution of environmental clearance process;

(c) whether any demand has been raised for greater streamlining and rationalizing of approval and clearance process;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether any expert committee was set up in this regard;

(f) if so, the details thereof alongwith the composition;

(g) the steps taken/proposed to bring transparency in the clearance process; and

(h) the benefits derived therefrom as of now?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Ministry of Environment and Forests has proposed amendments in the Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006, *vide* S.O. 195(E) dated 19th January, 2009 for obtaining comments/suggestions from all concerned.

(b) to (d) The proposed amendments are both clarificatory in nature and also to make the notification more comprehensive and rationalized, which *inter-alia* include: (i) enhancement of threshold limit for construction projects from 20,000 sq.m. to 50,000 sq.m, (ii) modernization and expansion projects without increase in pollution load to be exempt from the provision of EIA Notification, 2006, (iii) prospecting of minerals to be exempt from EIA Notification, 2006, (iv) biomass based power plants upto 50 MW to be exempt from EIA, (v) category 'B' projects to be exempt from scopping for three years, and (vi) proactive/voluntary disclosure of information relating to grant of environmental clearance for ensuring effective implementation and enforcement of environmental regulation through the creations of societal vigil. The comments/ suggestions on the